

March 19, 2021

Ms. Lucy Sloman  
Land Development Manager  
Community Planning & Development  
P.O. Box 1307  
Issaquah, WA 98027

**RE: Pre-Application for Redevelopment of GE Healthcare Building Site (1040 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW)**

Dear Ms. Sloman,

AvalonBay is under contract to purchase the GE Healthcare Building Site located at 1040 12th Ave NW in the City of Issaquah. As a supplement to our pre-application submitted by our architects, Ankrom Moisan, we are including the below commentary and questions to ensure a productive meeting.

**Developer Goals**

- Develop approximately 425 well designed apartment homes (over 50 of which will be affordable) that our future residents will be proud to live in.
- Develop a sense of community with a building that is approachable, aesthetically appealing, and enhances the use of the site for the long term. The amenities will help our residents socialize and connect with others while our site planning and landscaping will enhance the connections to transit, retail, nature and recreation both on our site and in the areas surrounding it.
- Improve the condition of and access to the green space along the southern property line of our site.
- Improve the pedestrian circulation through our site and access to the shopping and entertainment to the east of our site for our residents and the community at large by:
  - Adding an east-west pedestrian connection along the southern edge of our building mass (connecting 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW to eastern driveway)
  - Adding a north-south pedestrian connection at the east of our site connecting NW Maple Street to the east-west pedestrian connection

- Adding an east-west multi-modal connection along the north side of our site
- Improving the sidewalk along the north side of NW Newport Way
- Continue AvalonBay's commitment to science-based climate goals by incorporating LEED for Homes and other sustainable best practices – AVB is a leader in this area with over 50 environmentally certified communities and 25 more under development
- Design for the long term as AvalonBay continues to own and operate our communities after development – we are not a merchant builder.
- Further the goals of Issaquah's comprehensive plan to provide housing in the urban core / Gilman neighborhood.

## **Green Space**

- As part of our due diligence, AvalonBay engaged Wetland Resources, Inc. to complete a reconnaissance of the site and review of federal, state, and city documentation. This investigation determined that critical areas do not encumber the site as the green space does not meet the definition of a wetland or stream and Issaquah's existing classification of the waterway (stormwater drainage) is appropriate.
- Despite this, AvalonBay sees significant potential for the preservation and restoration of this natural community amenity, and we are optimistic our development can enhance this area. For example, the reconnaissance noted an abundance of invasive species, low quality spacing of trees, and minimal bioavailability.
- Given the current improvements on the site AvalonBay will consider not introducing any impervious improvements south of the current improvements, remove the invasive species, address the tree spacing, improve storm water quality with bio retention, provide pedestrian access, and increase the size of the green space by voluntarily holding our development further north on the site.
- With these actions we will ask the City to approve SEPA DNS on these issues.
- Additionally, as the green space does not meet Issaquah's definition of a "Natural Area" as defined in the Central Issaquah Architecture & Urban Design Manual (UD.2.3.2.3) we do not believe an outsized step back is required on our southern exposure, but will voluntarily explore opportunities to comply with the spirit of the regulation to avoid an imposing street presence.

## **Through Block Connectors**

- The section of the Central Issaquah Design Manual regulating through-block connectors specifically requests connections between public rights-of-way. With the location of the hotel to the north, green space / stormwater drainage to the south and an existing building to the east (further blocked by a drainage pond) we are limited in how we can provide these connections.
- Considering site circulation holistically we are proposing a multi-modal connection at the north property line and for most of the east property line. In addition, we are proposing a

connection east-west between our building and the green space and a pedestrian connection north-south through the green space. This north-south connection fits with what is shown in the Issaquah planning documents.

- Does the City agree with our assessment that this is the best solution to enhance community connectivity?

### **Fire Access / Hydrants**

- The project is designed to allow for fire and emergency vehicle access to all sides of the building.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW: Designated aerial fire apparatus access road with 15-30' distance from building (IFC Section D105.3)
  - Northern Driveway: Fire lane with partial cantilever of building above
  - Eastern Driveway: Secondary fire apparatus access road (IFC Section D106.2)
  - Southern Pullouts: Provides pullouts to allow coverage of southern end of building with 200' hose length from center of truck (IFC 503.1.1)
- Are these fire access road designs sufficient for Eastside Fire?
- IFC 503.1.1 allows the fire code official to increase hose length from 150' if the building is fully sprinklered – AvalonBay is proposing 200' reach as our building will be fully sprinklered to NFPA 13 standards
- Are proposed hydrant locations acceptable?
- Does the proposed water main design work for hydrant coverage?
- Can fire turnarounds be located under a cantilevered building above?

### **Tree Retention**

- Tree retention will be a challenge for this urban in-fill site – many of the larger trees that sit within the developable site area are located such that retention is not feasible if the site is redeveloped.
- Similarly, retention of many street trees in the right-of-way is incongruent with our desire to update or install sidewalks that meet current design guidelines.
- We are still studying if we are able to meet the requirements of the code through retention of trees at the southern end of our site, but believe a more in depth consideration of Issaquah's end goals on plantings is worthwhile.
- If AvalonBay proposed a selective re-planting with native species, does Issaquah have a pathway to facilitate that conversation?
- Is there an opportunity to pay a fee-in-lieu if tree retention is not viable on the site?
- We have engaged Creative Landscape Solutions as our arborist for this project and welcome a site visit with the City's consultants to review our best path forward.

## **Newport Way**

- Given space constraints with the drainage ditch we are exploring a nonstandard sidewalk configuration. Is this acceptable to Issaquah?
- Are there City funds available to complete sidewalk improvements to the Newport / Maple intersection?
- We do not plan to underground the power or telecom on Newport Way – can you confirm this is acceptable?

## **Traffic**

- Will a traffic study be required, and if so, how do we scope the work for our consultant?

## **Retention of Non-Residential Square Footage**

- AvalonBay submitted a formal interpretation request through our land use attorney to resolve outstanding questions on language that seeks to retain non-residential square footage. What is the City's response to these questions?

## **Stormwater Management**

- Can you confirm we should be designing to Central Issaquah Alternative Flow Control standards?
- We plan to maintain the existing discharge point to the Issaquah Commons detention pond through the neighboring eastern parcel – do you foresee any issues with this plan?

## **Easements**

- What is the City's preferred timeline and process to retire obsolete utility easements on the property (waterline, etc.)?

## **Trash**

- It seems logical to locate our trash facilities with access via the eastern driveway – does Issaquah take exception to this design?

## **12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW**

- Proposed curb cuts are identified on plan materials – does Issaquah take exception to this design?
- Sidewalk on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW currently meanders in and out of the ROW – is Issaquah okay with a revised sidewalk that mirrors the design of the hotel's improvements to the north order to maintain continuity?

## **Timing**

- What is the timeline for a Level 3 Review from plan submission to entitlement?

#### **A.2.1.2. Northwest Contemporary Style I Scale**

- Can the building lengths be broken down to 250ft by using significant notches? If so, what are the required dimensions?

#### **UD.2.1.1 Block Size & UD.2.2.1.0 [2.2.1.0] Block Access**

- Is the proposed layout of block access acceptable to meet the City's intent?

#### **UD.2.3.1 Building Edges I Enclosures**

- Under Appropriate, it states to build at least the first 4 floors to street edge. Does it mean the project can build more than 4 floors to street edge?

#### **UD.2.4.2 Usable Open Space I Rooftop Use**

- The requirement for usable roof top space is in conflict with building code for our building type that limits the highest floor of occupied space to 75ft. The roof at 87ft cannot be occupied. How do we reconcile?

#### **14.3.A.4 Building with footprint greater than 45,000sf shall be comprised of at least two masses or building volumes.**

- We interpret this language to allow for a contiguous structure so long as the building visually emphasizes distinct massings or volumes – is this correct?

#### **14.5 Weather protection min. 75% required.**

- The sidewalk does not abut property line. Would the weather protection be required?

Thank you for your review and we look forward to discussing these items in more detail at our pre-application meeting.

Sincerely,



Carl K. Shorett  
Development Director  
AvalonBay Communities, Inc.